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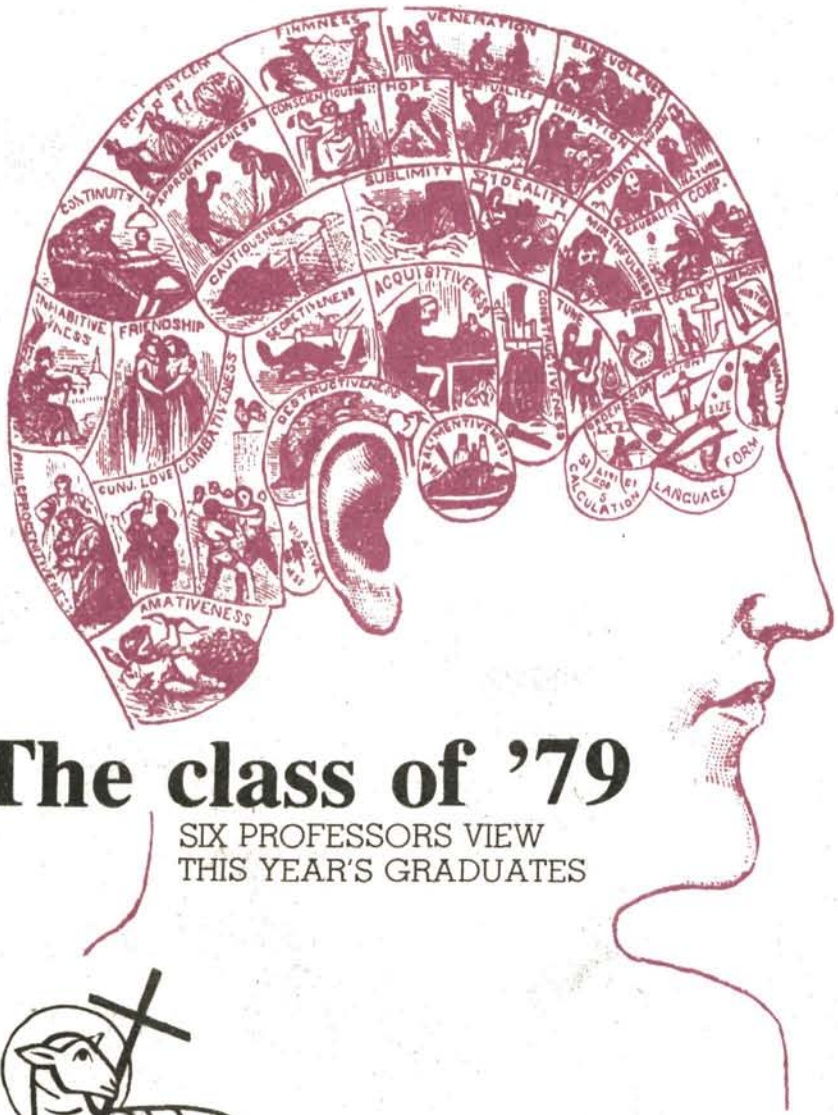

The class of '79

SIX PROFESSORS VIEW
THIS YEAR'S GRADUATES

FLANNERY O'CONNOR

THE HABIT OF BEING
Robert Phillips

JACK N
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University of Notre Dame

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MINISTRY

SUMMER INSTITUTE

TWO SESSIONS: JUNE 18-29; JULY 2-13

The Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry (C.C.U.M.), in collaboration with the departments of theology, economics and sociology at the University of Notre Dame, will offer two different two-week institutes. Both sessions will present programs in three areas:

THEOLOGY OF COMMUNITY
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A C.C.U.M. Certificate in Social Justice can be earned, beginning this summer, by successfully completing nine studies in this program—three in each area, and completing an approved field-work experience.

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SOME OF THE OFFERINGS are:

Spirituality of the City
Msgr. Robert Fox, Full Circle Associates

Current Efforts at Church Community
Philip Murnion, Office of Pastoral Research

Women in Society and the Church
Elizabeth Carroll, Ph.D., R.S.M., Pittsburgh

Puebla and After
Robert Pelton, Ph.D., C.S.C., Notre Dame

Empowerment Through Parish/Community Organization
Marjorie Tuite; Harry Fagan; Lawrence Gorman, C.C.U.M. Justice Team

Labor, Collective Bargaining and Church
Msgr. George Higgins, U.S.C.C.; Charles Craypo, Ph.D., University of Notre Dame

Third World Economics: At Home and Abroad
Denis Goulet, Ph.D., Overseas Development Council

Spirituality and Social Action
Lee Cormie, Ph.D., Divinity School, Chicago

SYMPOSIUM

Those registering for the first session may participate, without charge, in a gathering of national leaders in social justice, on the topic ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND THE CHURCH. This meeting is made possible by a grant from the Indiana Committee on the Humanities.

GRANT WORKSHOP

On the Saturday falling between the two sessions, June 30, there will be a workshop for beginners in grant-writing. This bonus session is open to anyone registered in Session I or in Session II.

For registration forms, write to the address below:

Helen Volkomener, Executive Director
Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry
1112 Memorial Library
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

Tel. (219) 283-3293 for registration forms.

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Burghardt

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Correspondence

In praise of Garvey

Montagnola, Switzerland

To the Editors: I feel deeply indebted to John Garvey of "In Defense of Solzhenitsyn" [Sept. 1] and "Sick, Sick, Sick—or Evil" [Feb. 2]—two of the most outstanding moral essays I have read in years. And I feel indebted to you for printing them.

MICHAEL D. AESCHLIMAN

Jacques treatment

Notre Dame, Ind.

To the Editors: Frank Sheed's evoking the memory of Jacques Maritain in his "Letter to the Editors," February 16, 1979, and Abigail McCarthy's doing likewise—but more specifically and incisively—in the same issue, prompts me—a humble "trudger along after Jacques"—to take pen in hand and to clamor out from the housetops and from my favorite barstool (an imaginary one—I am just putting in a barstool for effect—and to get on the good side of many of your reader-persons out there;—I don't really care all that much about bars!): *we ought to read Maritain*—now, before, in front, and always. And, as my students know, whenever I say "read," I mean "read and reread, ponder and reponder, strive to enter ever more deeply into. . . ." Maritain is a towering giant—he has many answers for us.

JOSEPH W. EVANS
The Jacques Maritain Center
University of Notre Dame

Flap over flops

Paterson, N.J.

To the Editors: As one who has served on community 'non-profit' housing boards for over twenty years developing two cooperatives on the West Side of New York City and one rental project and another in progress in Paterson, New Jersey—the very time span indicates a large part of the problem—I should like to deny gratuitously what James Fuerst has gratutiously asserted [Mar. 2] that "projects started by nonprofit organizations . . . most often turn into flops."

Twenty union sponsorships of section 236 housing in a decade across the whole country is good but hardly headline news. Your author might have also included the pioneering efforts of the butchers' union in New York.

The success story of the neighborhood and church groups in cooperative and rental housing also needs its telling before Fuerst's type of lament, because it is in print, becomes further fear-making material to keep the timid but good from undertaking anything in the light of the supposed record.

All non-professional sponsors of housing have similar problems, such as, being used as fronts by profits-motivated developers, building at rentals beyond the reach of their own constituencies, controlling the technicians, and providing good ongoing management.

As for being too soft in tenant selection anyone can hire management realists. My latest experience on a tenanting committee indicated that we were housing for the most part those who worked for service institutions, including religious ones. I was very quick to vote for the worker philanthropists who carry society's philanthropic works.

As Louis Wirth might have asked, "Is it so different outside of Chicago?" The only walked-away-from subsidized housing development I have known is here in Paterson, built by a union which within a few years was unable to be held responsible for backed-up sewers and leaking roofs.

HENRY J. BROWNE

In the next issue . . .

A representative selection of pro- and anti-SALT letters.

Deerslayer naysayer

Flossmoor, Ill.

To the Editors: Thomas Powers's article, "On Killing a Deer," [Feb. 2] is a sickening, arrogant tale of insensitivity. Until man recognizes his kinship with all of life there can be no Kingdom on earth. It is disappointing to find this account in *Commonweal*.

JANE MEIDELL

But at least we spelled the name right

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: It appears that a large scale printing error has garbled the last page of my review article on Schillebeeckx's christology [March 16, page 150]. The text as now printed has rearranged several paragraphs of my original manuscript. This leaves many of my comments incomprehensible and in some instances gives an impression of saying things I did not intend to say.

To unscramble that last page, the reader would have to follow these directions: 1) At the conclusion of page 149 turn to the last line in the first column of page 150 and read to the end of the article; 2) Return to the first column on page 150, line 11, the paragraph beginning with the words, "Many impressions . . ." and read to the end of the second to last line in that column; 3) Return to the top of the first column on the same page and read the first 10 lines: that is the original conclusion to the article.

I would appreciate it if you could bring this problem to the attention of your readers. I hope that some of those confused by the printing mistakes in my article might be able to retrieve some clarity.

(REV.) DONALD SENIOR, C.P.

Our apologies to Father Senior and our readers for an unfortunate printer's error.

THE EDITORS

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ROTTEN BOROUGHS IN CONGRESS

EVERYONE knows about inflation in the supermarket but not in Congress. The *Washington Post*'s Bill Peterson did a little homely calculation to dramatize the point. What cost you $123 at the corner grocery in 1972 cost $168 in 1976 and $215 in 1978. That's bad, but the escalation in the cost of a Senate seat was even worse: $552,423 in 1974 and $1,058,671 in 1978. Other comparable figures are just as bad. The average House candidate, winner or loser, spent $108,000 in 1978, up from $71,000 two years before. In New York, silk-stocking Democrat Carter Burden spent $1.4 million or $20 a vote for the privilege of losing his bid. In New Orleans Republican Robert L. Livingston spent $1.3 million in his campaign.

The Senate, of course, as befits what some people consider the "upper house," was more expensive. In the 1978 election, each of the 68 Senatorial candidates, winners or losers, spent an average of more than $900,000 on their campaigns. This is up sharply from 1976 when the average was $555,000. The 35 who won Senate seats invested an average of nearly $1.2 million each. Biggest spender was Senator Jesse Helms (R.-N.C.) who laid out $6.9 million or more than $13 a vote to win a second term. Senator Charles Percy (R.-Ill.) spent $2.5 million compared with $1.4 million in 1972. Senator John Tower (R.-Tex.) spent $4.3 million, compared with $2.3 million in 1972.

Best placed of all the candidates, of course, were those who were independently wealthy. As the man said, "I've been rich and I've been poor, and rich is better." In the 1974 election law revision Congress set limits on candidates' contributions to their own campaigns, $25,000 for a House race and $35,000 for the Senate. Subsequently, however, the Supreme Court threw that provision of the law out, saying that it violated the candidates' First Amendment rights, equating spending money with the right to free speech. Subsequently, in pursuit of free speech William Clement became the first Republican Governor in Texas history after lending his campaign effort $3 million. In the Senate races more than a dozen candidates made six-figure loans or gifts to their own campaigns, without which they would not have been viable contenders. Republican H. John Heinz III, for another example, loaned $2.6 million to his 1976 campaign, none of which has been repaid, and now he sits in a body that includes more than 40 other millionaires.

For the candidate who is not a millionaire, there is a sudden surge in special interest giving. Senator Donald Stewart of Alabama, a man of modest means, borrowed $239,800 to keep his candidacy alive and received $164,300 from various special interest groups. The number of unions, corporations, trade associations and other groups with political action committees has more than tripled since 1974 to 1700; their donations have also almost tripled to an estimated $35 million last year. One dollar out of every six the 20 new U.S. Senators received as contributions in 1978 came from special interest groups. It would be naive to imagine that such

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groups will not seek a return on their money.

Does all this money, from whatever source, pay off? Definitely yes. Warren Weaver Jr. of the *New York Times* estimates that candidates who outspent their opponents won 28 of the 33 contested Senatorial races. "In six states," said Mr. Weaver, "the winners outspent the losers so dramatically but won so narrowly that it could be argued plausibly that money had produced the result." In races for 366 contested seats, the bigger spender won 82 percent of the time. Republican Senatorial candidates averaged spending of more than $1 million, Democrats about $700,000. Incumbents in general had almost twice as much to spend as their challengers.

That last point is part of the reason it is hard to get reform legislation on this subject through Congress. Few want to legislate away their own built-in advantage as incumbents. Nonetheless, the inflation of campaign spending is so bad that Congress may soon be forced to take action. One step would be to put some reasonable ceiling on campaign spending. In last fall's Congressional races candidates spent $150 million as compared with $100 million two years earlier, and there is no end in sight. Something will have to give, and hearings on the topic have already begun in Congress. Efforts at reform are likely to take two forms: a spending ceiling on each candidate and a plan to eliminate the need for special interest contributions by providing federal funds to match individual contributions raised, as is done now in the presidential race. Reluctant as incumbents often are to aid a challenger, this seems an idea whose time has long since come. The present method in which Congressional seats are too often up for sale to the highest bidder is clearly a national scandal.

WOMEN & ILLITERACY

In an Education issue, two items of educational news are worth noting:

- Perhaps this will come as no surprise, but a recent study done at six of the country's most prestigious schools indicates that women have lower self-esteem and lower aspirations than men, even though their grades are about the same. In the survey 54 percent of the men and 46 percent of the women said they thought they would earn a doctorate. Of the women, 49 percent said they were confident that they were well prepared for graduate or professional school, as compared with 61 percent of the men. Typically, 10 percent of the women and 16 percent of the men said they wanted to become doctors. More women than men took careful notes; more women than men prepared carefully for class; more women than men panicked over an assignment or exam. In short, as the director of the study put it, "Maybe society does not encourage them enough. Something happens to make women accept a lower level of achievement."
- Writing on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times*, Jonathan Kozol said that 20 percent of the adult men and women in this country cannot read enough to understand a want ad or write enough to fill out a job application. The term for this condition, which is crippling to any dream of leading a productive or rewarding life, is "functional illiteracy." According to Kozol, the functional illiteracy figure is high for blacks, 44 percent, and even higher for Hispanics, 56 percent. He thinks the total figure of illiterates is 23 million at the least and more likely 30 million. The cost of this to the nation, in welfare and lowered productivity, he estimates at $6 billion a year. What we need to do, says Kozol, is to sign up 5 million literacy teachers to go into the homes of these 30 million illiterate adults on an emergency basis. Volunteers would receive a crash course in methods and would receive a minimal salary, say $20 a week, and would be drawn from young and old, students and retired. Kozol has no doubt on the basis of his experience that college students by the thousands would volunteer, and what he proposes is an all-out national attack on illiteracy, giving it the same priority as an attack on plague, pestilence or war. Mr. Kozol's statistics may be a little questionable and his proposed emergency remedy somewhat utopian, but there is no doubt that the problem of functional illiteracy in our society is a real one that cries out for practical remedies.

ONLY THE BEGINNING

It was St. Patrick's day, but frustration rather than celebration ruled the recent Assembly of the Laity at Notre Dame. Over a year earlier, the Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern had lamented, in Russell Barta's words, "the fact that a truncated, narrow vision of the laity's role was replacing the broad vision developed by Vatican II." Or as Ed Marciniak described it at Notre Dame, "lay ministry" had come to mean that "the laity become the Church's paraprofessionals." Training laity for paraprofessional status appears to claim virtually all the diocesan budgets devoted to "lay" programs. Social and political transformation is equated with church lobbying, episcopal pronouncements or dramatic "witness," but not with the workaday efforts of trade unionists, business executives, professionals, government officials, educators and parents.

Barta, professor of social science at Mundelein College, and Marciniak, president of the Institute of Urban Life, were among the signers of the Declaration who had established the National Center for the Laity in Chicago, and invited over a hundred participants to Notre Dame to translate the Declaration's concerns into specific proposals.

The task proved difficult. The problem seemed more readily felt than articulated in ways leading to action. While many of the participants were veterans of the "specialized" Catholic action movements of the '50s and early '60s, there was a quick, almost too quick, insistence that "you can't go home again . . . the same forms aren't viable." Lacking a consensus on why those earlier organizational forms had collapsed, unwilling to rush headlong into new organizational initiatives,

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and scrupulous about not simply asking others—whether bishops or some undefined audience of Christians—to undertake what they themselves would not, the participants seemed caught in a simmer of creative conversation that never quite came to a boil. The impulse to wrap up the weekend's work in a burst of rhetoric was successfully resisted; and though the participants contented themselves with a modest affirmation of the need and the difficulty of sustaining the laity's service in the world, that in itself indicated their seriousness about carrying on this effort.

Of several minds: *Frank Getlein*

PEACE DIVIDEND, HAH!

WAR IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

ALTHOUGH it is still unrecognized anywhere, American foreign policy is shadowed by a cloud now no bigger than the clenched fist of the Communist salute but destined soon to fill the sky, perhaps even to rain upon the parade to national bankruptcy our foreign policy has been conducting lo, these thirty years.

For those three decades, in case you hadn't noticed, American foreign policy has been to spend ourselves broke and then some on fantasy weapons to defend ourselves against the hideous threat of Communist takeover of the rest of the world, followed immediately by the turning of the entire rest of the world against the United States, followed, probably, by our ultimate defeat but if not, certainly by our devastation in a war against the rest of the world for the survival of freedom.

The evidence of such Communist intent was as follows: The Soviet Union had driven deep into middle Europe in the closing years of World War II, seizing the briefly independent nations of the Baltic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria and, potentially worst of all, a third of the famed freedom-loving Germany. The Soviet Union then, bringing to fruition plans going back to the young André Malraux and all that, seized control of China, ousting the famed freedom-loving Chiang Kai-shek (I have no idea how the *New York Times* now spells his name) to exile on the island of Formosa, renamed "China" for the purposes of American foreign policy. But even though this "China" thus remained part of the free world and a bastion against the Soviet drive for global conquest, there were still an awful lot of Chinese over there on the mainland in what must thenceforward be considered Russia's largest province, or "republic" as the Russians outlandishly styled their captive nations.

Clearly, if that huge mass and enormous population from Thuringia to Shanghai were indeed dedicated to the destruction of the free world at large and the United States in particular, we would indeed have a lot to worry about and more than enough reason to spend ourselves bankrupt on arms, ruinously inflate the economy by so spending, conscript our young men and send them to die so that some corner of a foreign field would be forever Nixon's, ignore growing social problems at home, all that, though not quite enough reason to impose wage-price controls that control prices as well as wages, nationalize General Motors and Boeing and ration gasoline. After all.

There was, of course, another, alternative explanation of why the Russians moved into all those East European countries. Three explanations, in fact. The first was simply that they got there in the course of chasing the Germans out of Russia and pursuing them back into Germany. We do understand that it is extremely difficult, although it can be done, to get from New York to Worcester, Mass., without going through or over Connecticut. The same principle applies to the Leningrad-Stalingrad to Berlin route, but our foreign policy fabricators are as slow learners in geography as they are in history. Besides, they were busy rewriting World War II to reveal that the Germans were all good Germans who hadn't a clue as to what bad old Hitler was up to, while the Russians were all bad Russians who were well aware of and enthusiastically approved of Stalin's doings.

The second explanation for the infusion of Soviet soldiery into East Europe and the Balkans is simply that many of those countries had at one time or another been owned by Russia, and Russians regarded their independence as stolen property, rather as Henry Kissinger regards Iran. The awful truth is that that part of the world for centuries was constantly being carved up and redistributed among Russia, Prussia, Austria, Turkey, at times even Sweden and, good grief, Lithuania. The continuing Russian occupation, while indefensible, is certainly no novelty. Like their arts, the Soviets' Eastern European policy is the continuation of czarism by (slightly) different means.

But, again, State Department thinkers are as slow learners in history as they are in geography.

The third explanation was, if anything, even more unthinkable to those present at the creation, so to speak, of our adoption of national bankruptcy as foreign policy. This is simply that the Russians were scared out of their britches by America, to this day not only the country that invented the atom bomb, but the only one that has dropped it. Twice.

There's an old Louis Armstrong story that applies here. As a kid, Louis picked up and delivered the laundry his mother did for the white folks. Among his duties was hauling water from the bayou to the backyard boiler. One day he came running back without water, without bucket. "Mammy, Mammy, I can't get the water, there's an alligator in the bayou." "Louis, go back and get the bucket and

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fetch the water. Just remember, that alligator is just as scared of you as you are of him." "Mammy, if that alligator is just as scared of me as I am of him, you don't want to use that water for washing clothes in."

But if you think the mighty minds of worldwide anti-Communism here at the fudge factory are any quicker at jazz anecdotes than they are at geography or history, you don't want to use *that* water for washing brains in.

Anyway, after this long history of the dread threat of the godless atheists in the Kremlin getting ready to land in Hoboken any minute now unless we signed over our houses, cars and next month's paycheck to the Pentagon, suddenly it's all collapsed. Red China isn't Red China anymore. It's Red Independent China, or Red Friend of the West China, which makes it more like Red Skelton than Red Russia. But if China is split off from the Kremlin's conspiracy to conquer the whole wide world in order to be able to conquer the United States, then the conspiracy itself isn't viable. Sooner or later, even a country that eats Florida tomatoes believing they are tomatoes is going to catch up on that one. The monolithic threat ain't monolithic anymore. The Pentagon has been throwing an Armageddon and nobody came. Rebates are unthinkable, to be sure, but surely we should be able to cut down on the military handouts a little. There must have been something in the military megabucks of yesteryear devoted to containing the Yellow Peril. Surely that could be pared back, just a tad.

No, it can't. It's like Vietnam. All during that military version of "Laugh In," we were assured monthly that once the war was over there would be a "peace dividend" and money saved from the military budget would be channeled into domestic needs or even back to the poor old taxpayers.

What happened? Need you ask? The military had barely got themselves back from the debacle than they discovered that in the course of blowing the wad in 'Nam, vital, essential, frighteningly necessary war works had been postponed here and more money than ever had to be handed over to retired generals now selling arms or the Russians would be in Tenafly on Tuesday.

So here. The preoccupation with the threat of the Red Chinese caused us to neglect the threat of, say, the Commie Albanians, who, as soon as they can get their hands on a boat . . .

Or how about the Cubans? Any nation that violently rejects Howard Hunt in his red fright wig and funny voice machine as emperor is a dangerous nation, must be prepared against. If they fought us off at the Bay of Pigs, they clearly have designs on Key Biscayne, site of the future Nixonland and waxworks Bebe Rebozo and Henry Kissinger. To arms! To bucks!

The fact is there will be no peace dividend from the withdrawal of massive China from the ranks of our implacable enemies anymore than there was a peace dividend from the withdrawal of the Pentagon from its adventures in Southeast Asia. The Pentagonians don't even need an Albania or a Cuba. They probably don't even need a Soviet Union. If they can get Jimmy Carter to raise their budget substantially while cutting everything remotely connected with positive human values even as Jimmy Carter is preparing for the agape with China, then the loss of Russia as enemy would probably be no loss at all.

So the coming ice age begins in Russia, freezes the Kremlin into immobility, the Supreme Soviet into living statues. Dismantle a single rifle? Are you kidding? Suppose it thaws? Give us your dough, they're coming by frigid air.

FRANK GETLEIN

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

THE IRISH: LOOK AGAIN

AMERICA'S FIRST GENUINE PROLETARIAT

IRISH AMERICA has come of age. So thinks Sean Donlon, Eire's thoughtful new ambassador in Washington. Eire itself came of age, he said, with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter uprising in 1966. With that celebration the Irish experienced a confirmation of their country's identity as a nation among nations and began to sense what the real strengths of Ireland are—and have been. In the last fifteen years because of the great surge in international travel large numbers of Americans—many of Irish background, many not—have become acquainted with the real Ireland. And their perceptions have alerted.

The signs are many. At the embassy celebration of "the month of St. Patrick" there were as many people present whose ties to Ireland were cultural, economic, or in the context of world organization, as there were politicos or other Washingtonians with ties of blood. The young people who played and sang were not Irish Americans—just Americans of varied backgrounds—who have studied Irish traditional music and like to play and sing it.

In Washington—never a city of ethnic enclaves—there has been a surprising explosion of popular Irish pubs, ranging from the homey, multiroomed Dubliner near the capitol to the Irish Inn, California-like with brick and plants, in far-off suburban Silver Spring. They are frequented by young and old—the mix of generations is one of the attractions—by Irish and non-Irish. People find them welcoming and warm; they like the simple food, the drink, the informality and the good music. Again the music is the true traditional music, folk ballads, rebel songs and "contemporary Irish."

"Oh well, we do a few of these—we have to," said one group leader as he launched his fellows into a medley of *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling*, *My Wild Irish Rose*, and *Galway Bay*, a bow to the generations cut off from their heritage by the famine and its aftermath, sustained by sentimental dreams. That they find the

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reality more satisfying and more connecting is part of Irish America's coming of age.

Coming of age may also mean that we are at long last ready to confront all the aspects of the many-faceted history of the Irish in America. There is far more to it than the simple story of an immigrant people fighting its way, under the wing of the church, out of the slums of Boston, New York, Chicago and Philadelphia into power in government, business and the professions. The whole story is not the story of families like the Fitzgeralds, the Kennedys and the O'Neills of Boston. Or the Graces and McDonnells of New York. Nor has it all been the story of Irish ghettos which produced the Lonigans (of fiction) and the Daleys (very real) in Chicago.

It would take a *Roots*-like study of wide scope and scholarship to recover, for example, the history of whole generations and clans of Americans of Irish background lost to view because they were part of the pre-famine immigration, or because they drifted south or to the western frontier and lost touch with the church so long the center of Irish identity. Nine of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were possibly of Irish origin, but only one, Charles Carroll (demonstrably Catholic), is usually cited as that.

And how different might the story of the Irish—and the country—have been if, from the beginning of the great waves of Irish immigration, there had been societies bent on rescuing them, rural folk that they were, from the teeming cities of the eastern seaboard, and settling them on the land. The Germans had many such organizations. The great influx of the Irish (1850-58) occurred at the time of an abnormal growth of industry in the east. The Irish were caught and held by it. In the coastal cities they "found friends and relatives or at least the necessary day's wage on the public works and in the manufacturing and mining industries. Generally they dropped like tired migratory birds along the seaboard utterly spent by the effort to reach it. Destitute of all things and entirely unprepared in any way to move further inland, they were obliged to accept the first work that offered itself as a means of providing the immediate necessaries of life." (Henthorne, *The Irish Catholic Colonization Association of the United States*) They were, according to social historians, "the first genuine American proletariat."

The Irish who managed to make their way beyond the coast and to take up free land in the west did well. But by the time the Irish colonization movement—an effort by enlightened western bishops like John Lancaster Spalding and Irish leaders to rescue the desperate Irish and to settle them on the land—took real form, too many eastern prelates and politicians had a stake in keeping them in the cities. In addition to that the fanatical Irish nationalists whose eyes were fixed on the home country opposed Irish resettlement as a threat to their power.

Few of us are aware of the full effect on our foreign policy. In 1890 the *Westminster Review* reminded an England newly interested in political and commercial relations with the United States that she would have to take the American Irish into account—that probably half of the "rebel force" of 1776 was Irish and that "through Ireland and Ireland alone was America lost to England"! Debatable, certainly, and impossible to prove, but indicative of Irish political influence by the end of the nineteenth century. It may surprise Irish-Americans critical of the Jews and their involvement with Israel, or of Americans of Eastern European origin who are implacably anti-Russian, to realize that the passionate anti-British attitude of the "Irish vote" affected international relations for a hundred years—and, for good or ill, may have delayed our entry into two World Wars. What other ethnic group can boast or lament a militant minority who had the temerity to actually launch an invasion of another country as did the Irish nationalists who tried to wrest Canada from England?

But, more important, according to Eric Foner, is the fact that few historical accounts of the Irish in America take note of Irish radicalism, through which Irish workingmen and women identified themselves with the abolitionists and Knights of Labor, with Wendell Phillips and Henry George. "The radical Irish-Americans wished to transform their society even as they became a more integral part of it." From them sprang the Irish of the American labor aristocracy as well as leaders of the militant Western Federation of Miners. The formidable Mother Jones who organized miners' wives to drive strikebreakers away with brooms and mops and crusaded for workers all over the west was first a convent-taught Irish school teacher named Mary Harris. The organized social radicalism of the Irish Land League's branches and membership in the Knights of Labor were the only alternatives to Tammany and political clubhouses for Irish working people. Here they studied, emphasized temperance and union-building across divisions of ethnicity and craft. They challenged individualism and cautious reform with a new social ethic—a heritage worth examining in these days of liberation.

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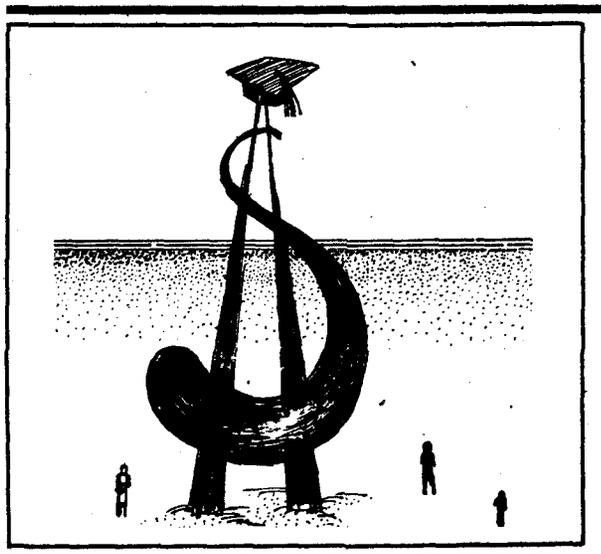

SIX PROFESSORS VIEW THIS YEAR'S GRADUATES

The class of '79

John Ahern: 'Entropy rules'

THE CLASS of '79 does not know who it is, or where it is going. It does not know how it relates to the past or the future, and so has little sense of the present. No life-sustaining beliefs, secular or religious, provide it with a goal, and, having no goal, it can imagine no path of effective action. Earlier generations, with an unearned innocence, thought the United States had a unique message for other countries. Some joined the Peace Corps, others became lay missionaries. When they came home they brought the unwelcome news that we took more than we gave, that our prosperity generated other people's misery, and that nobody wanted to hear our message. The class of '79 feels no desire to go abroad. It has nothing to say to the rest of the world, of which it is a little frightened. Earlier generations thought they could teach racial harmony to the South. They learned that their class and their cities bear an even greater responsibility for racism. The class of '79 is not about to deliver any homilies on the subject, or join any crusades to right the ancient wrong. Earlier generations had the heady experience of protesting an unjust and illegal war, and of shutting down the schools where they studied. They found exotic models of moral authenticity in the plucky Viet Cong and fervent Chinese revolutionaries. The class of '79 has no war to protest. The Chinese and the Viet Cong have stripped off each other's masks. Wherever it looks, the class of '79 sees nothing that calls it to action, no model to imitate or reject, and so obtain an identity.

These are the orphans of the Energy Crisis, certain that the world's material and spiritual resources are reaching exhaustion. They take it for granted that their lives will be poorer and meaner than their parents', that the future will bring drastic changes for the worse. But like their elders they prefer not to anticipate that moment. They live in secret terror that some mad gesture will plunge the precarious, declining but comfortable world they inhabit into a crisis from which it will be impossible to recover. Their great, doomed wish is that things would go on forever as they are going on now. They are well aware that their lives depend on petroleum deposits in countries they do not understand. They know, but choose to forget, that torture and tyranny have assured them a steady flow of energy. When push turns to shove, they know that justice, freedom and democracy will not count, and they do not care. They have no faith in their own altruism or anybody else's. They might be the first Americans ever to countenance openly the deliberate suppression of the liberty of other countries.

Entropy rules their universe. Like men on the eve of the first millennium they think the cosmos is winding down. They do not think there is enough going around. "We are too many dogs gnawing on a single bone," one of them told me. Many say that children diminish the world's resources, rather than renew them. They doubt the wisdom of procreation. They do not believe that technology can provide a solution to these problems. The engineering students I know say that government and industry impede the development of the technologies we need. They feel helpless.

The class of '79 is haunted by what it will do when some unforeseeable turn of events brings it face to face with itself and the world. War would have a strong appeal for a generation that would like to act, but does not know how, that has no outlet for its dormant energies, that has known neither leadership, nor the satisfactions of belonging to a community with a common goal. War would offer it the chance to externalize its inarticulate inner conflicts. Whether it will give itself over to aggression, and whether that aggression might be morally defensible, will depend on the leaders it chooses and creates. It has found no leaders in its parents and elders.

Yet this class is disturbingly like its parents. In neither group can one identify a set of common religious and moral values. Almost passionate moral concern is expressed on only two issues: energy and abortion, which both agree, by and large, is the cornerstone of women's freedom and a moral act of ecological responsibility. Violence, injustice, fidelity and community are not words that figure prominently in their conversation. The lack of conflict with parents on important

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issues deprives society of a necessary tension. It adds to the sense of perilous stagnation.

Like its parents, this class dedicates more and more of its time to athletic recreation. It turns with vehemence to physical activity in search of health, balance and energy. In physical activity it recovers and celebrates the sense of struggle which gave meaning to its ancestors' lives, and which used to be found in work and family life. During the weekends, at dawn and at dusk, the class of '79, like its parents, expresses and satisfies a need for self-discipline, asceticism and sacrifice in solitary liturgies of running and jogging. Some transform sport into a search for a transcendental breakthrough, a consoling and ineffable high, suspiciously (and comically) similar to contact with the Absolute, which is strenuously denied in other areas of life. It is to be hoped that somewhere in this class obscure misfits are taking advantage of this chance to look on the world as it is, without the filters and veils of their parents' ingenuous illusions; that they are running, fasting and meditating their way to that enabling vision which, for the present, is absent.

(John Ahern is assistant professor of Italian at Stanford University in California.)

Martin Marty: 'The exceptions'

MY INTERVIEW sample included Joel '77, in-law Susan '78, John '78, Peter '80, foster-son James '81, Micah '81. On the average, the Marty clan *is* the class of '79. Would they help me come up with something cute, something not obvious, something that would make my *Commonweal* remarks sound perceptive?

A brunch conversation and a couple of letters turned up the obvious. Good. Historians tend to trust confirmations of truisms. Sometimes "what everybody is saying" is closer to truth than is a clever discernment. The truism about '79, unanimously offered: it is self-centered, its best and brightest are career-minded, obsessed with grades for six days and on the seventh they rest with bursts of hedonism. They tend to be spiritually self-centered, too. They are impatient with disciplines that demand or institutions that exact commitment.

Some clan members are at public schools, some at private, some at church-related colleges, so the six may not be all that representative. They sound a bit like campus editors, which one of them is, and campus editors always complain about apathy and unconcern. But the six are also quick to point to blazing exceptions among their peers, to people who violate the boundaries of the generalizations. I must say that many of their peers lead me to blush to recall the seedy crowd that my classmates and I were thirty years ago. We did not yet think about thinking about anyone else, the subject had not even come up.

Peter's letter seemed especially reflective and patient. Making clear he was drawing on national, not merely local campus impressions, he reasoned why '79 is as it is: "With the increasing world crises (oil, population, inflation, crime) seemingly closing in on all sides of the forthcoming generation (us) there is a trend toward future security in the professional world. . . . Since 1970 our own liberal arts college faculty in business-economics has more than tripled while enrollment has been stable. In other words, money is more of a priority than 20 years ago. . . . Many of the world concerns are in a worse state than in the sixties (hunger, threats to peace . . .) but many now feel that with money and a good education, they will be on top of these concerns. . . .

"Therefore secular interests are much more of a preoccupation now than spiritual or ecclesiastical ones. Students may, and do, admire others of a decade ago who put deep values first in their lives, but they themselves are not about to get caught in the abyss of financial insecurity in the future decades of crises to come. . . . Many campus Christian organizations, Common Cause, environmental groups, have grown 'old' in our eyes—with few exceptions.

"Finally I think there is a tendency for all of us to look back to earlier campus generations and see what they did. In some sense we feel left out of their times. . . . Left out in the fact that there really are no major issues or trends. . . . Almost a regret that we did not go through college with any *great* events as those that confronted anti-war students. The search for new fads and musical groups is an escape. 'Things just aren't happening.' . . . We admire the students of the past and their actions, but everyday secular problems concern us and our futures more than values, convictions, etc. and we are therefore going to be concerned about a 'serious' future."

And he too adds that emphatic postscript: "Be aware, as I'm sure you are, that exceptions do exist. . . ."

And I am aware. As a sometime campus visitor, lecturer and consultant, I see mainly the exceptions in the form of students who pick up speakers at the airport, take them to dinner, host them in housing units and classes, and share concerns at end of day. They are no doubt as large a minority as were the genuinely engaged students who were surrounded by sunshine soldiers and faddish participants in the sixties.

I would like to see more of them, and a better future for those that already are visible. The Marxists would say: "no chance"; the current students are victims of capitalist consumerism and forthcoming collapse. The neoconservatives, who make a game of fighting the Zeitgeist while they are actually blowing with the prevailing winds, would say: why bitch? Social concern and spiritual depth are concerns of elites. The Christian prophets would observe that at last Original Sin is patent on all fronts, and that it has led to a new blindness. When, after all, was *more* happening than in the generation that gets the last chance to make the last decisions about, say, the environment (there being no second round for the ozone)?

Human nature evidently does not change, but human cultures do, and these envelop and enshroud their makers and victims. So long as the class of '79, with the encouragement of its elders, pursues nothing but private morale at the expense of public morale, it will generate a culture in which the self-centered self will continue to gain the whole world and lose its soul. My hunch is that the class of '79 simply exposes to view a

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more honest set of exemplars of human nature than did the class of '69, which could pose as altruistic while setting out to save its own neck. Eisenhower: "Things are more like they are now than they ever were before."

Spiritually, all trends run against "public morale," whether in the form of fashionable therapies, borrowed Orientalism of most types, and Born Again salvationism. 'I'll get mine." I am puzzled over the class of '79's patience with mind-numbing or brainless sensations while it finds "boring" the deeper mysticism, more jarring prophecy, authentic spiritual discipline, and heroism and sainthood styled over the centuries. As a historian, parent, Christian, and seeker of public morale, I will join those who will continue to watch for, be moved by, and nudge the group my clan keeps reminding me of: "the exceptions." They are truly exceptional.

(Martin E. Marty is the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Modern Christianity at the University of Chicago, associate editor of The Christian Century, *and author of* A Nation of Behavers.*)*

Paul R. Messbarger: 'Nameless'

I HAVE sometimes thought that the greatest power I exercise as a parent is the power to name my children. The effect of that act, admittedly somewhat casual, is sometimes profound and always incalculable. It initiates an identifying process as certainly as does the genetic pattern itself. Neither his family nor our nine-month-old child quite knows or understands the subtle shaping influence on his perceptions or ours of his name, Matthew, but of the influence I do not doubt. These thoughts are occasioned by the assignment to characterize the class of '79, and they were further stirred by the remark of a member of our campus ministry team who suggested that the most interested readership for such reflections must be the graduates themselves and precisely because they have so little sense of a collective persona.

Perhaps that's a starting point. The class of '79 is nameless. And maybe that is a blessing, considering the widespread, sometimes revealing, but always slightly specious labeling practice during the past three decades. To say that won't stop the practice, of course; Americans have nearly irresistible interest in cataloguing the national character, especially at that point of early adulthood when the outlines begin to firm. You will forgive me the mild indulgence of recalling the moment I, too, became a genre.

On a May evening in 1956 the graduating class of my college gathered in the spare environs of a basement dining room in Atchison, Kansas, to share for a last time the special fellowship of our four years together and to hear one of our classmates describe what it was that made us distinctive. Our interpreter, a student of the classics and a Benedictine seminarian, invoked for his theme a slogan very common among us, "Don't sweat it." Inelegant as the phrase is, we fairly basked in the meditation it evoked, suggesting a general state of contentment with ourselves and the world we anticipated, but based as much on a modesty of expectations as it was on any extravagant regard for our own capacities. Whether in truth this characterization bespoke a rare state of moral and psychological equilibrium or a dangerous degree of innocence is still, I think, debatable.

What is not a matter of contention is the fact that what for the 1950s was a coherent and generally benign world has, for our current graduates, become unglued. And that may give us a second point: our graduates perceive a world not only less congenial but also less coherent. Quite naturally their response is a pervasive tentativeness, frequently to be found in a preoccupation with immediate and precisely defined goals. And here the current stereotype may be useful: aware from early adolescence of the highly competitive state of job placement and education in the professions, large numbers of our students appear to have worked out a finely calculated program of segmented challenges. Each course, each fragment of a course, carries definitive significance; career and happiness, life and death ride on the second decimal point of a grade average. As traumatic as this may appear, and as destructive to a healthy learning experience as it certainly is, this crisis-ridden mentality has also a curious anesthetizing power. So long as the cosmos pivots on a mid-term grade, issues of war, poverty and destruction of the environment, not to mention vital introspection, keep their distance. And of course in this affair the educational institutions themselves have conspired. What to some academicians looks like a return to basics, to intellectual rigor, may very well be the intimidating effects of a tight job market.

But I am being unfair, to my own students and to the generation at large. At Loyola of Chicago, which is neither representative of the national student body nor wholly free of its general characteristics, the class of '79 is simply expressing a perplexity that numbs us all, and finding guidance as rare from spiritual sources as from secular.

Do they practice their faith with any kind of regularity? Who are their moral heroes? What issues out of the larger world engage them? These questions, too, yield an uncertain account. Undemonstrative in all such matters, the class of '79 appears to have a genuinely open spirit. At the very least, they do not repudiate such questions or, worse, arrogate to themselves a moral terrain too splendid to be shared with the rest of the population. For all their privatism, they are at least open to discussion of religious matters; do not, that is, scorn such topics as irrelevant or anachronistic. But a theological assertion that does not touch on direct experience gains little interest.

As a group, it is possible that the class of '79 has more sympathy for a Bakke than a Berrigan. It is not that they lack generosity or a sense of social justice. They are simply trying to cope with a fact their elders often forget: they may well be the first generation in this nation's history that is not licensed to expect a higher degree of affluence or cultural status than their parents. And for genuine moral heroes, they will take a "non-aligned" Mother Theresa of Calcutta over more strident prophets of social revolution.

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I sense that the profile emerging from this account is terribly blurred and even self-contradictory, a gray mass of indistinct shape and voice. I prefer to think the image is less attributable to the students themselves than to this writer's inadequate sounding devices. And this deficiency argues for me the point that I should better have spent my words on anecdotes and biographical miniatures, a strategy that would have warranted a tone of cautious optimism. For our best do not lack conviction, and our worst are not filled with the passionate intensity of their elders of a decade ago. Instead, they appear to have provisionally accepted the limited terms offered them, with neither elation nor pronounced reluctance, and they will go about their lives willing to renegotiate those terms whenever necessary in the same spirit of realistic compromise.

That's not a bad exit line, even though the subject remains nameless. My guess is, however, that when a few years' experience has impressed itself on the class of '79, we'll find it occupying a fairly healthy middle ground between triumphalism and disengagement; and I, for one, take a good deal of comfort from that prediction.

(Paul R. Messbarger is Director of the Honors Program at Loyola University, Chicago.)

Michael Zeik: 'Likable'

UNLIKE the hateful class of '69 which was lovable, this one is likable. The seniors don't make trouble; they even study. Have our nuclear-energy plants, in one short decade, produced so remarkable a mutation of genes and chromosomes? Alternate hypothesis: our seniors are so concerned about 'getting on the boat,' they haven't the chutzpah to rock it. Their personal amiability derives in equal part from social apathy and economic anxiety . . . So far, no surprises.

It may be somewhat less fashionable, however, to point out that some of their apathy is probably due to the growing discouragement of their middle-aged profs. (including myself) regarding the present possibility of social and political reform. I am sure that the potentiality for student commitment is still there—awaiting leadership, and a certain amount of drama.

As regards the sexual and spiritual values of our seniors, I consulted—not willing to trust my own impressions overmuch—a few of my friends among them. The unanimity of their observations impressed me.

The ideals of marriage and sexual restraint are far from having been abandoned. While there is probably more premarital sex than a generation ago, it is not all that casual; and frequently ends (even without pregnancy) in marriage. Virginity itself, endangered, is not extinct. It is not, so far, even entirely apologetic. (Ideals aside, the seniors insist that men, when they want to settle down, refuse to settle for other men's playthings . . . The double standard is alive and well.)

God, by the way, is also alive and well, although weekly Mass-attendance has viral pneumonia. The seniors go—but on mood, not schedule.

One of my students tells me that probing, late-night conversations on religious concerns are on the increase; but she is the warm and thoughtful kind of person around whom such conversations would naturally coalesce—so I can't be sure her experience is typical.

At least the new cults are not getting them. Our seniors see them merely as avenues to 'belonging,' not God.

You want me to sum up? O.K. It could be worse; it could also be a lot better . . . God, make some trouble down here! Send us a saint! (Only, please, not in my family.)

(Michael Zeik teaches in the Department of History at Marymount College, Tarrytown, New York.)

Monika K. Hellwig: 'Personal'

THE EXERCISE of characterizing (perhaps unintentionally caricaturing) a younger generation always carries the danger that it may reveal much more about the author than about the group being described. They do, of course, look younger every year, and their attitudes and performance look less and less like the good old days.

How one sees the class of '79 depends a great deal on the standard of comparison. Compared with my own college contemporaries many aeons ago, they are distracted, they want quick results, they are not for the most part interested in learning but only in the status and income that a college degree will bring. But then I did my undergraduate studies in England in a situation where university studies were more elitist.

If one compares the class of '79 with that of '69, certain characteristics do seem to stand out in sharp relief. Those with whom I have had contact are not going to set the world on fire. They are for the most part unashamedly interested in money, that is in finding their way into high income brackets. It is my recollection that the graduates of '69 may have had this as a hidden agenda but would have been ashamed to admit to it. Consonant with this, they seem anxious to play the college game and the life game according to the rules. In the course of their college careers on our campus, the class now graduating have not engaged the administration in any major confrontation. During their college careers we have not once had to end classes early or close the campus down on account of demonstrations that threatened to get out of hand. My recollection of the late sixties is that we never finished a spring semester as planned. Though the upheavals and demonstrations did not always originate on our campus or with our students, they were sufficiently involved that it made the normal conduct of business impossible. By contrast, when a rowdy group of demonstrators approached our campus this spring, students massed themselves to form a barricade against the demonstrators' entry at the front gates to the campus. I asked a number of students whether they were opposed to the claims of the demonstrators. Their answer was that that was irrelevant; their concern was to keep any demonstrators off the campus, especially on a day when employment interviews were being held by business firms for graduating seniors.

In general it must be said that the graduating class of '79,

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while still casual, looks considerably neater than the class of '69. In the small sample of my acquaintance, fewer of them look "spaced out," fewer of them have dropped out and refused to graduate. Although the employment situation and the prospects of admission to professional schools or fellowships for graduate schools, are all really no better if not actually worse than ten years ago, there appears to be considerably less discouragement and almost no anger against the established order of things.

In my recollection, religious values a decade ago were heavily prophetic. They were almost wholly identified with social justice issues of peace, poverty, civil and human rights, disarmament and so forth. Religious interest was turned to the East, toward the exotic, the forbidden, the unexplored. Social justice issues are not absent from our campus today, but they seem to carry neither the numbers nor the passion of '69. Interest in Eastern religions is not absent either, but the attraction is no longer that of the exotic or the forbidden. Religious interest in general is far less prophetic and far more personal. Many of the class of '79 have had experience, happy or otherwise, of the charismatic movements, of prayer groups, of student retreats. Few if any of them are angry at the institutional church, possibly because they do not even know enough about it. Most, during their college years on a Jesuit campus, have exhibited a pleasant curiosity about the church and its affairs or an amiable and friendly indifference on the matter on a "live and let live" basis. When they are interested in religion they are overwhelmingly interested in prayer and in understanding doctrinal teachings. They are not angered over official statements on divorce or contraception and such matters, because they do not on the whole take them very seriously.

It would be difficult to describe the moral values of the group. Perhaps the truest epithet would be "conventional," in the sense that they appear to accept the morality they have seen in operation among their parents. If truthfulness, honesty, sexual morality have been treated quite lightly in the world they have known, the standards are not questioned. If rather strict standards have been operative, they do not seem to be questioned either. It is my impression that students from such backgrounds are not ashamed to maintain their traditional morality on campus, whereas some years ago they would have felt very heavily pressured to "get with the swing of things."

When all is said and done, persons are free and responsible for their own values in any generation, thank God, and all generalizations are more or less untrue.

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Jean Bethke Elshtain: 'Search'

THERE is no single way to characterize the class of '79. At my own institution, this year's graduates represent a bewildering potpourri of political, religious, ethnic and social commitments, although the University of Massachusetts is unusual in the number of left-oriented radicals among its student population. (This can be accounted for in part by the presence of what *Science* magazine, in an article on the subject, termed the "critical mass" of radical faculty at the University.)

Perhaps the most cogent, direct evidence I can proffer concerning the class of '79 draws upon my experience teaching a seminar designed for senior majors in our elite Social Thought Political Economy program, a program which includes among its ranks some of the University's most highly politicized, theoretically sophisticated, and articulate students. These students are expressing more pointedly and poignantly than in previous years certain concerns which can only be seen as moral and even religious. Ambivalence is the term that best captures their respective states of mind and conflicted personal and political identities. The Soviet Union's barbaric treatment of its dissidents, China's "war of punishment" against Vietnam, the ignominy of Pol Pot's reign of terror in Cambodia (not forgetting America's role in helping to set the stage for that historic tragedy) have thrown irritants into what was, in some instances, an unreflectively held Marxist image and doctrinal truth. Students sensitive to moral concerns are deeply troubled by what these events and policies may say about their own and others' uncritical commitments to one or more variants of Marxist-Leninism. Thus I find deeper interest in the question of "socialism and freedom" than I have at any other time in recent memory.

My atypical minority of the class of '79 is interested in re-examining the American political tradition, à la Garry Wills's *Inventing America*, in re-thinking the question of "rights" and in attempting to bridge the gap between a tradition tied to rights and the socialist tradition without junking altogether their own shared historic roots. The values implicit in their restless and troubling search may be summarized by what appears to be a growing awareness that to answer the question, "What ought I to do?" one must first seek to determine "Who am I?" The latter question constitutes the key to these students' moral concerns for it cannot be treated without considering more broadly the nature of human beings, what it means to be a person. Cast in religious terms, a doctrine of personhood is being sought as part of the creation of a touchstone from which to defend the inviolable dignity of human beings.

As a teacher, I find that I can raise Kantian imperatives on "respect for persons" and find a receptive, if warily so, student audience. Amidst the admitted predatory individualism, instrumentalist use and abuse of others, narcissistic sensate-domination, and dogmatic cultism also to be found among students—and perhaps even more representative than my admitted minority—the group of seniors I have discussed embody the kind of humanistic concerns, also exemplified by Pope John Paul II, that retain a vibrancy our society's malaise has failed to altogether eradicate. Dare we share Freud's touchingly expressed conviction that, "The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest till it has gained a hearing"?

(Jean Bethke Elshtain is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.)

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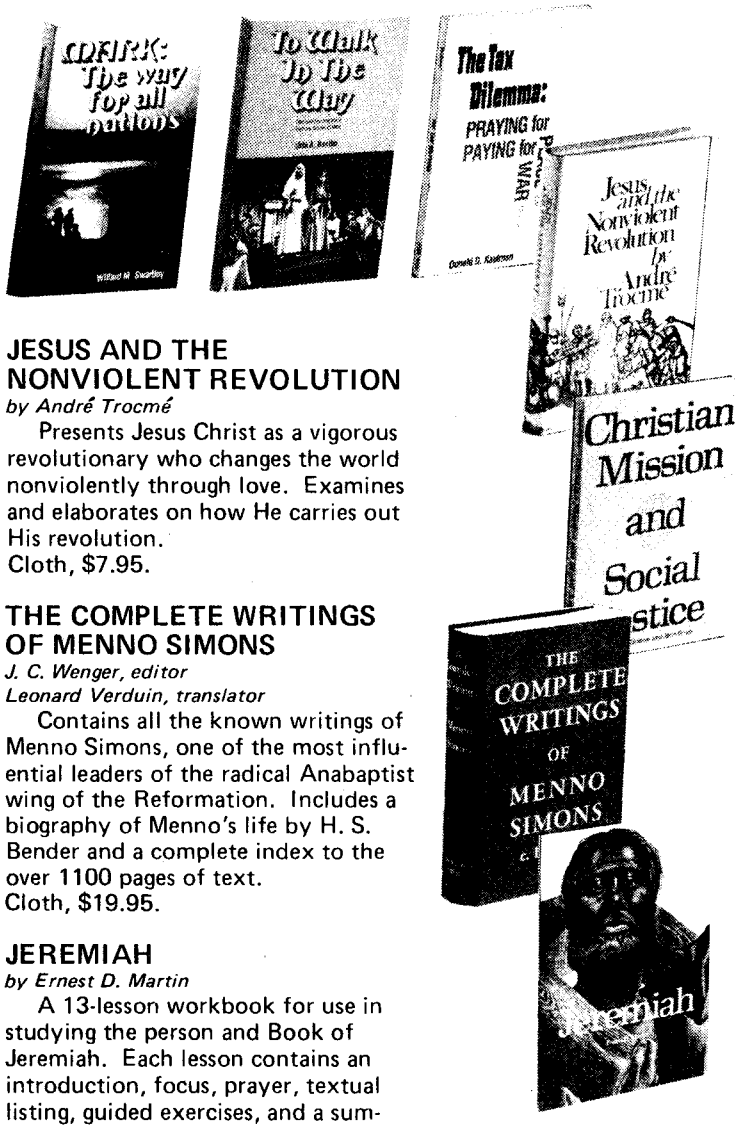

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The supper of the lamb

JACK MILES

ONE OF the most widely anthologized of all anthropological reports is John Batchelor's 1901 description of the Ainu ritual of bearcub sacrifice. It is not popular just because Batchelor wrote well, though he did, nor because the sacrifice is anthropologically instructive, but also, as I see it, because Batchelor's personal reaction to the sacrifice was that uncanny mixture of revulsion and tenderness that is the immediate modern reaction to the notion of killing an "innocent" animal to please God. For too obvious reasons, the death of the innocent, especially the sacrifice of the innocent, is a compelling topic in this century. Batchelor catches some of that compulsion in his description.

The Ainu, to say just a word about them, are an ethnically distinct tribe living in Hokkaido (northern Japan), Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands. It was once their custom to capture a bearcub, raise it for a time as a child among their own children, then cage it though still caring for it lovingly, and finally, by slaying it, send it off as a god to the gods. It is the description of this "sending off" ceremony that is the anthologized portion of Batchelor's work.

Batchelor's translations of the Ainu ceremonial speeches to the victim cub are haunting; e.g.,

> O thou divine one, thou wast sent into the world for us to hunt. O thou precious little divinity, we worship thee; pray hear our prayer. We have nourished thee and brought thee up with a deal of pain and trouble, all because we love thee so. Now, as thou hast grown big, we are about to send thee to thy father and mother. When thou comest to them please speak well of us, and tell them how kind we have been; please come to us again and we will sacrifice thee.

During the actual slaying, which included a period of taunting and teasing, the Ainu worked themselves into a frenzy: ". . . they sometimes trample on one another in their eagerness to have a hand in the death." Worship and food-offerings were offered to the dead deity; and while the men danced, a portion of the cub's flesh was boiled into a kind of soup. Some of this was symbolically offered to the cub itself. But shortly the presiding tribesman said, "The little divinity has now finished eating; come ye friends, let us worship."

> He then takes the cup, salutes it, and divides the contents—a very small portion to each—among all the assembled guests, for it seems to be absolutely essential that each person, young and old alike, should take a little . . . this appears to me to be the special way in which he shows his social and religious fellowship with his totem god and the people. Not to partake of this feast and not to make *inao* would be tantamount to confessing oneself outside the pale of Ainu fellowship.

Batchelor called the feast "to us, cruel and barbarous." He referred to the cub repeatedly as " the poor beast" and "the poor brute." The custom among Ainu males of smearing themselves and their clothing with some of the cub's blood he called a "beastly habit." And yet one senses, particularly in his translations of the prayers, some deep attraction. What lay behind that attraction? A bond of sorts was forged at this point between the refined English scholar and the wild tribe of hunters. What forged it? In answering these questions, I shall suggest, we may come close again to certain buried but still powerful primitive elements in the paradigmatic Western ritual, the sacrifice of the Mass.

IN THE FIRST place, then, the cub-sacrifice seems to have aroused in Batchelor a kind of pathos. The anthropologist did not, plainly enough, participate in all the other meanings the ritual had for the tribesmen, but to this one he was open. Their smearing themselves with blood in the hope of becoming great hunters—this remained alien to him. But in the death of the young animal, he did feel—his translations of their prayers make this clear—a heightening of the painful and universal human awareness that all order rests upon some measure of cruelty. We may wish it were not so, but we know it is. We can only hope it will not go worse with us than with our fellows.

In *The Brothers Karamazov,* there occurs an exchange that seems curiously relevant. Ivan says to Alyosha:

> "Tell me yourself, I challenge you—answer. Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it is essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature—that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance—and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears. Will you consent to be the architect on these conditions? Tell me, and tell the truth."

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"No, I shall not consent," Alyosha said softly.

"And can you admit the idea that men for whom you are building it will agree to accept their happiness on the foundation of the unexpiated blood of a little victim? And accepting it remain happy for ever?"

"No, I can't admit it," said Alyosha suddenly.

What has this quotation to do with the Ainu sacrifice? Just that the cub is a tiny, deceived little creature. Hear Batchelor again:

> Now all the people shout and rush forward, every one eager to assist in squeezing the animal till life is quite extinct. It is said that they must be careful not to allow the poor beast to utter any cries during its death struggles, for this is thought to be unlucky.

Ivan Karamazov is preoccupied with the sacrifice of children, but anthropologists suspect that the Ainu cub-sacrifice replaced an earlier sacrifice of a child, a cub human. This very replacement can be documented in more than one other tradition. Among the Jews of antiquity, for example, the firstborn male had to be redeemed, ransomed, in the Temple by the sacrifice of a lamb or another animal or offering. The emotions aroused by the sacrifice of a young, trusting animal, particularly when the animal has been treated as a child, are thus by design quite close to those that were once aroused by the sacrifice of a child.

Now, to be sure, when the Ainu tortured a cub to death, they did not raise the edifice of their society "on its unavenged tears" in quite the way Ivan Karamazov has in mind. However, and this is the point, their society, like all societies, could not exist without torturing to death *many* tiny or weak or vulnerable creatures and raising its edifice on *all* their unavenged tears. There are large differences between societies. Not all are equally unjust. Still, none is just; and Ivan's hypothetical case—the just society raised on the tears of only one victim—is justice on the cheap, an immensely kinder case than the one we actually face. The cub-sacrifice renders visible a structural cruelty in society to which the Ainu must sadly resign themselves but in which, in another sense, they can rejoice. The tender apology made to the cub is made to all the casualties of social order.

I do not mean to confine the meaning of the sacrifice needlessly. Religion is more than society writ large. But I believe it may have been this aspect of its meaning that appealed to the European visitor. The crude propitiation of a god in whom one does not believe has no appeal. If the god propitiated by the cub-sacrifice were simply that combination of fearful imponderables that snatch children from their parents, if the plea, in effect, was "Was are giving you one 'child,' please leave us the rest," its appeal would not be profound. But if the god propitiated is the tribe in its fated capacity to unmake individual lives in the interest of the collective life, then its appeal, perhaps particularly in 1901, could have been overwhelming, for the Victorian "tribe" was merciless in that regard.

A ritual like the Ainu cub-sacrifice is a measured, circumscribed admission of something that under ordinary conditions is denied. A society cannot continually dwell upon the truth of its own cruelty, and yet if it never pauses to face that truth, it can, as it were, lose its mind. A ritual drama of innocent suffering like the cub-sacrifice is a blade thrust between society's sense of well-being and its sense of moral goodness. We forget—we desire powerfully to forget—that the two are separable. A ritual like this reminds us of what we want to forget and restores our sanity. Every society has its equivalent of the American apologia, "I worked hard, I did my job, I didn't bother anybody, I got my rights." Saul Bellow put it this way:

> People by the billions and for ages sweated, gypped, enslaved, suffocated, bled to death, buried with no more justice than cattle. But Moses E. Herzog, at the top of his lungs, bellowing with pain and anger, has to have justice. It's his *quid pro quo,* in return for all he has suppressed, his right as an Innocent Party. *I love little pussy her coat is so warm, and I'll sit by the fire and give her some food, and pussy will love me because I am good.*

What the Ainu ritual does is remind us of what the rights of the Innocent Party really are. As the novelist takes cuddling an animal as expression of the naive social contract—"I have been good, so no evil will befall me," so, with the same psychological brilliance, the tribe takes torturing and killing an animal as expression of the reverse—"Though I have been good, evil may befall me," Precisely because the bear is an Ainu totem animal, precisely because the totemistic relationship is enhanced by the direct adoption of the cub, the meaning

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of the cub-sacrifice is not crude propitiation of an alien god but the subtle and intimate appreciation of the human condition. Are you a cuddly pussycat of a girl? Or a scrappy little bearcub of a guy? Your turn may be next.

SO FAR, so somber. I want to suggest, however, that Batchelor's sympathy with the Ainu sacifice was due not just to its excellence as an expression of the human condition but also to its similarity to the Christian sacrifice of the Mass. There is a poignancy in both the similarities and differences of the Christian "Supper of the Lamb" and the Ainu "Supper of the Cub." Whether Batchelor was firmly in possession of these as an informed and practicing Christian or knew them only from their echoes in English art and music I do not know. Let us presume only the latter as we ask ourselves a few questions about Jesus, the "Lamb of God," and about the Christian liturgy as a totemistic ritual.

Before it was applied to Jesus by Christians, the title "Lamb of God" was applied to Isaac by Jews. It is Isaac, of course, who is bound to the sacrificial altar by his father, Abraham, in Genesis 22. In that chapter, it is rather Abraham than Isaac who is being tested, but in time the focus shifted. Sacrificing lambs in the Temple came to be seen as a memorial to Isaac. It was said that through the merits of Isaac God would raise the dead. Geza Vermes writes:

> In short, the binding of Isaac was thought to have played a unique role in the economy of the salvation of Israel, and to have a permanent redemptive effect on behalf of its people. The merits of his sacrifice were experienced by the chosen people in the past (especially in their redemption from Egypt) invoked in the present, and hoped for at the end of time.

In the Genesis narrative, an angel of the Lord intervenes, shows Abraham a ram trapped in a nearby bush, and bids him sacrifice the ram in place of his son. When Isaac's role is taken by Jesus, however, we observe a shocking difference; i.e., this time God goes through with it. No animal is substituted for Jesus. Jesus actually loses his life. The earliest Christian theology understood the death of Jesus to be what we might now call a re-primitivization; i.e., the substitution of a human being for the animals that had been substituted for human beings in the past. It is as if despite all efforts at totemization, the difference between man and animal is just too great. No totem animal will do but another human being, and he must not die symbolically but actually.

In the New Testament "Letter to the Hebrews," the words of Psalm 40 are put in the mouth of Jesus:

> Bulls' blood and goats' blood are useless for taking away sins, and this is what he said, on coming into the world [Psalm 40:6-8]:
>
> You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
> prepared a body for me.
> You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;
> then I said,
> just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,
> 'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'
>
> . . . He is abolishing the first sort [of sacrifice] to replace it with the second. And this "will" was for us to be made holy by the "offering" of his "body" made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

We shall have more to say in a moment about the "taking away of sins." For now, it is enough to note the paradox of a human being substituting himself for an animal in religious sacrifice. Because the human sacrifice of Jesus Christ is only symbolically re-enacted in the Christian liturgy, it can seem rather a milder, cleaner thing than the animal sacrifice of the Ainu. But even the symbolic sacrifice of a member of one's own species is uniquely disturbing.

The similarity of the Christian to the Ainu ceremony requires, however, not just that Jesus be a sacrificial animal but that he be a totem animal. In a sense, since the effort of totemization establishes a quasi-specific relationship between the members of one species and another, Jesus, as a human being, is an automatic totem for all human beings. But a further relationship is sought, and it is sought in a form that consciously mimics the Jewish covenant with God, the covenent that began with the Exodus from Egypt. The last of the ten plagues called down upon the Pharaoh and the Egyptians was the death of the firstborn. The Jews were instructed to slay a lamb, splash some of its blood on the doorjamb as a signal to warn off the Angel of Death, and then cook and eat the flesh of the lamb in preparation for their flight from Egypt. In this way, the blood of the lamb both "saved" the Israelites and bound them in covenant with God. It was these actions and those that followed at Sinai that, pre-eminently, made them the chosen People, the People of God.

This last meal of the Jews in Egypt, commemorated annually at the Jewish Passover, was in no sense a totemistic ritual. The lamb was not a Jew, the Jews were not sheep, and nothing was said or done, symbolically, to suggest this. The Christian development of this meal, however, has indeed become totemistic in some sense, for the lamb that the Christians ritually eat is a human being, Jesus Christ; and secondarily at least, by echoes from elsewhere in the New Testament, Christians are encouraged to think of themselves as his fellow sheep, as the flock of the Good Shepherd, those of whom Christ says to Peter, "Feed my sheep," etc. The further difference in the Christian adaptation of Jewish Passover symbolism is that, so to speak, the blood of the lamb is splashed on every doorjamb. The words of Jesus—"This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood which will be poured out for you"—are taken to establish a covenant relationship not just with the Jews but with all men. Jesus is now the Paschal or Passover Lamb. The Chosen People is now the human race.

It is not plain how or why the formation of a covenant by the joining of human beings to some totem figure should require the death of the totem, nor is it clear in what sense the death of a totem—Jesus or any earlier or other totem—"takes away sin." But if we can answer these questions, I think we may gain an important insight into why the Christian ritual has survived and how a memory of it might have affected Batchelor's reaction to the Ainu ritual.

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WE MAY begin by continuing the passage we earlier quoted from *The Brothers Karamazov*. Alyosha, after conceding to his brother Ivan that it would be wrong to build a just society on the unexpiated blood of even one victim, as if anyone could forgive a crime committed against a third party, goes on to insist that the victim himself does have the right to forgive. A universal victim then could forgive every crime.

> "Brother, you said it just now, is there a being in the whole world who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? But there is a Being and He can forgive everything, all and for all, because He gave His innocent blood for all and everything. You have forgotten Him, and on Him is built the edifice, and it is to Him they cry aloud, 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed!' "

In other words, Ivan accuses God of being the ultimate perpetrator of all crimes. To such a God, in the famous phrase, he hands back his ticket. Then, without really denying that God is the ultimate perpetrator, Alyosha counters that God is also the ultimate victim of every crime. It was this unguessable truth about him, Alyosha contends, that was revealed when, as Christ, God became a victim on Calvary. But if God is the universal victim, if all crimes are committed against him, then he does not overstep himself in forgiving all crimes. For even those committed against the innocent are also committed against him.

But where now is the crime when the same person is both perpetrator and victim? In some sense, it evaporates. There cannot really be a crime if there are not two people, one the perpetrator and the other the victim. In any cycle of crime, revenge, counter-revenge, etc., the roles alternate. If at some point all parties could believe that they deserved the evil they had suffered, the motive for further evil would wither. Paradoxically, then, it may be that when the Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world, what he takes away is not guilt but innocence; what he takes away is the psychological possibility of innocent victimized, undeserved suffering. Stripped of that great and arming sense of his own innocence, a man feels, minimally, that it is not morally *wrong* to take no action against those who have harmed him.

Something close to this inheres in the structure of the Ainu sacrifice, I feel. I mean simply that there is no rhyme or reason in why one lucky cub should be taken in from the forest and treated to choice foods, coddled, fondled, pampered . . . and equally little reason why another should be killed promptly and skinned to make shoes. The fortunes of men are similarly so awry, the good fortune of some resting always somehow in the ill fortune of others, that it is hard with utter confidence to object to anything. Stoicism and withdrawal are wisdom's only counsel. The proper frame of mind is the murky, sickly monologue of Camus's "judge-penitent" in *The Fall:* guilty of everything, innocent of everything, resisting no misfortune and no offense, for on what basis would one do so?

The choice of the lamb as totem animal now comes to seem sinister, for this is the animal that goes compliantly to its own execution or its own castration. I am reminded of lines by Ted Hughes:

> What is it this time, the dark barn again
> Where men jerk me off my feet
> And shout over me with murder voices
> And do something painful to somewhere on my body.

Or in the more familiar words of Isaiah 53:

> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
> yet he opened not his mouth;
> like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
> and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb,
> so he opened not his mouth.

In his revulsion at the Christian ideal, Nietzsche saw the thing more clearly, I think, than many Christians have. What good is it that sin, in the sense of crime and counter-crime, is taken away if *this* is the result, this spiritless muck of defeat?

There would indeed be no sense in it but for the eschatological hope of Christianity. The power of the Lamb as a totem and of the Supper of the Lamb as a ritual is the Christian belief that things have not always been, nor will they always be, as they are now. Real change can occur. The sorrows of the present can be made good. And at the core of that belief in real change stands the non-resistance to evil that the Lamb symbolizes. In the center of the splendid mosaic dome at Ravenna, representing the crown of the cosmos, as it were, one sees the figure of the lamb. As if to say, "Look as high as you can, stretch as far out as you can reach, this is what you will find."

FOR ME, however, the best expression of the buoyant hope that the Lamb can stand for comes, though few would hear it now, in Händel's "Hallelujah Chorus." "King of kings—forever! And Lord of lords—forever! And he shall reign forever and ever!" But who was the King of kings and Lord of lords? No one, I think, in the Bible-drenched culture of the early eighteenth century could have failed to hear the echo of Revelation 17:12-14:

> And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind and give over their power and authority to the beast; they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, *for he is Lord of lords and King of kings,* and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.

The new chosen people which is all mankind—"called and chosen and faithful"—is invited to a victory won by a conquering Lamb. I find a kind of confirmation in this reading of the "Hallelujah Chorus" in the fact that, though the chorus nowhere mentions war or gratitude for delivery, it has often been sung after victory in battle. This is not the subject matter of its own lines, but it is that of those to which they allude.

Surely no cultivated Englishman of the turn of the last century could have failed to hear and hear often Händel's "The Messiah." I speculate, of course, but it seems just possible to me that some of the tenderness of Händel's setting of "Behold the Lamb" may have found its way into Batchelor's feeling for

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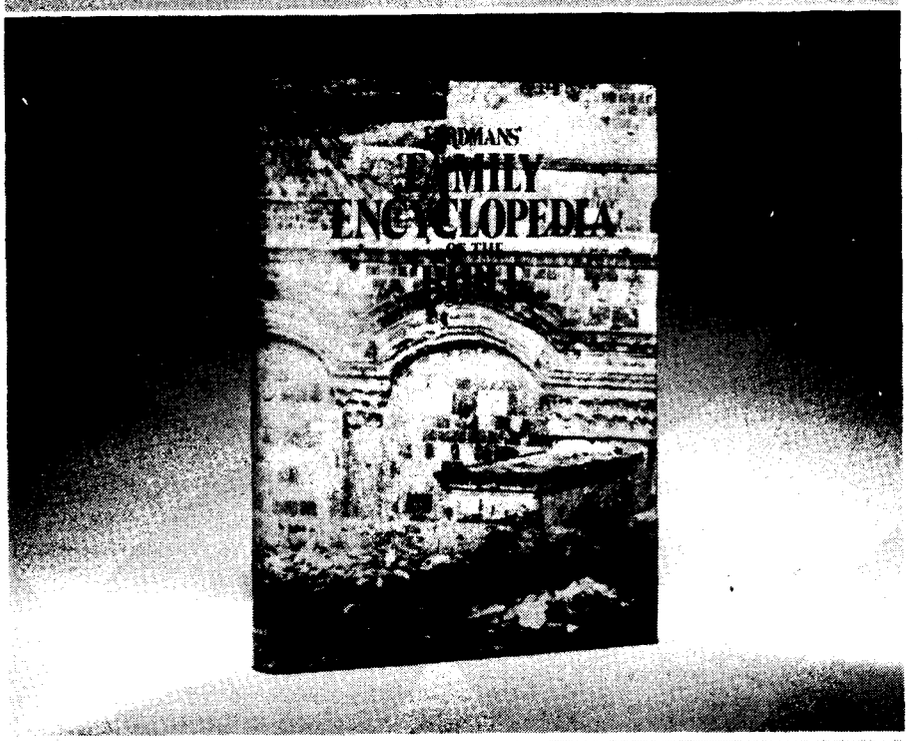

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the Ainu victim cub, thence into his translation, and thence ultimately into his interpretation of the Ainu ritual as a holy communion. For men are not bound together by having some hapless wretch declare himself victim on all their behalf. The act must somehow lead on to a common victory. We may all be both perpetrators and victims; but unlike God, if he is indeed perpetrator and victim of the whole, we are not perpetrators and victims in equal measure. It cannot seem just simply to acquiesce unless there be hope that beyond the acquiescence, in ways no empirical technique can chart, there waits not just justice but triumph.

Triumph! What a word! This is no modest contentment with one's lot that we are talking about, nor some mean and calculated success. This is the music of Händel and the splendor of the Ravenna dome, quintupled, exploded, bursting in glory. This is what the Lamb really means.

And this is what the Christian is invited to hope for at the totemistic ritual of the Mass. The Christian ceremony involves eating bread and drinking wine, of course, not eating roast lamb. But at the moment of communion, when the sheepish Christians in attendance are to bind themselves to one another and to their totem animal, their human totem, their dead and risen Christ, the priest holds the consecrated bread aloft and says,

> This is the Lamb of God
> who takes away the sins of the world.
> Happy are those who are called to his supper.

So, in its own way, the Christian ritual is totemistic after all.

The churches are emptier now than they have been, and I myself am not often in the sparse congregations. But as for Batchelor, so for many others, the Supper of the Lamb is served in strange chambers. "Agnus Dei" with the incantatory "Miserere nobis"—"Lamb of God, have mercy on us"—reaches every concert-goer as the climax of the classical concert Masses. The primitive power of the ancient blood sacrifice is still there, and so is the bounding, defiant, unreasonable, indomitable hope for justice.

Screen

LITTLE RED RYDERHOOD

WHEN YOU COMIN' BACK, H. BOGART?

MILTON KATSELAS, who directed *When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?*, worked for a long time in theater before making movies. He studied theater with actor-oriented teachers like Lee Strasberg and Joshua Logan, and has taught an acting class himself for many years. Since turning to movies he has specialized in adaptations from theater, including *Butterflies Are Free*, which he had directed on the stage was well. And even when he tried an action movie, *Report to the Commissioner*, the plot seemed to resolve itself into an essentially theatrical situation: two men holding each other at gunpoint in an elevator and unable to do anything else except talk, grimace and squirm under the tension. *Red Ryder* ends in a comparable situation, A concert violinist (Lee Grant) and her husband, a motel owner (Pat Hingle), a waitress (Stephanie Faracy), and a local no-good called "Red" Ryder (Peter Firth) are all held hostage in a diner by a flipped-out hippy dope smuggler (Marjoe Gortner) and his girlfriend (Candy Clark).

The principals in *Red Ryder* act their little hearts out, too. In the role of the berserk hippy, Teddy, Gortner evangelizes as never before. He takes on each person at the diner in turn, using his own bitterness as a goad to make them reveal to the whole assembly what awful sinners, what hypocrites, they are. He even devises a little miracle play where Red has to be the legendary cowboy who is his namesake. Throughout the whole process, however, *Red Ryder* is suffering by implicit comparison to that other adaptation of a stage play which it recalls so vividly—too vividly. I'm referring to *The Petrified Forest*. Like the Mark Medoff play on which *Red Ryder* is based, *The Petrified Forest* is set in the Southwest at a roadside diner where a gunman holds a chance assortment of locals and travelers at bay. Although the emphases and liaisons are somewhat different, Medoff's play has essentially the *same* assortment. The difference is that forty or fifty years ago this situation had a potential as melodrama that just isn't there anymore.

In *The Petrified Forest* it was revealed in the end that everyone was really just a little more honorable and purposeful about life than we had thought. In *Red Ryder* the opposite is revealed. Everyone turns out to be either a moral, physical or emotional coward, or all three, which is what's wrong with the whole situation. It's so predictable. Whatever dramatic potential it may have had in the past, for us this kind of situation is just group therapy. We have the mentality of that guy in the cartoon commercial who's offered an Hawaiian "Punch," gets socked in the jaw, and says with a smile, "Thanks, I needed that." If only someone could be nasty enough to us to strip away our false selves and reveal us as we really are, we believe, it would do us a world of good. There's no suspense in *Red Ryder*. The more abusive and threatening Teddy becomes, the more familiar and soothing the situation seems to be.

Since Teddy is implicitly the savior of all the others, as well as their attacker, the movie inevitably has an ambivalent attitude toward him. He is more sinned against than sinning, and when he is finally shot at the end, he refuses to defend himself and gets our sympathy despite everything he has done. It's in the nature of a shrink's work that we should love/hate, despise/admire him like this, and perhaps it's in the nature of an evangelist's as well since both are in the soul-saving business. I suspect that when Gortner bought the rights to Medoff's play, he saw that he could bring his own background to bear on it. In his capacity as producer of the film he could give himself, as actor, the freedom to perform. The counterpart role in *The Petrified Forest*—Humphrey Bogart's "Duke" Mantee—is

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the one that stole the show, and certainly Teddy is the only character here that's allowed to come even close to the two-sided complexities of that role. It was no doubt to help him with the realization of that role that Gortner brought in an actor's director like Katselas. In fact, the role of the white cop played by Michael Moriarity in *Report to the Commissioner* was a combination of the personalities of Teddy and Red in this film.

But I don't think Katselas ever really had the faith in the dramatic power of this property that Gortner did. The only remarkable thing about Katselas's direction is the way it relies on little cinematic tricks of a sort usually intended to shore up a weak performance. The film suggests that Katselas thought the characterizations and acting would need a lot of sly help to succeed. Whenever Teddy starts to get obstreperous, for instance, we hear the sound of a rattlesnake on the sound track. There's some hokey hand-held camera work, too, and at the end Katselas does the moment when Red shotguns Teddy in slow motion. Part of the problem with the ending is just that group therapy is by nature open-ended. It has to be forced to a dramatic conclusion. But with an effect like this use of slow motion, Katselas was really straining to move us. He was cheating, which suggests that he never was able to believe in this material in the first place. Whatever Katselas and the rest of us may feel about this movie, though, Gortner can console himself that at least one person must have been inspired by his performance. Candy Clark. As soon as production was completed, she married him. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Books: ON BEING FLANNERY O'CONNOR

LETTERS OF FLANNERY O'CONNOR:
THE HABIT OF BEING

Selected and edited by Sally Fitzgerald
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $15, 617 pp

Robert Phillips

There are at least five reasons to read this book. First is for insight into the novels and stories of Flannery O'Connor—important twentieth century fictional works about which the writer wrote many, many letters "explaining" herself to correspondents. Second, for advice on how to write your own fiction—Flannery O'Connor was incisive in such matters. Third, for insight into Flannery O'Connor's life, about which relatively little has been known, and some of which has been misleading. (She was not, for instance, a convert, but a lifelong Catholic.) Fourth, for long discussions of theology which are as lucid as unexpected in casual letters between friends. And finally, for sheer pleasure—Flannery O'Connor possessed a wicked sense of humor and a heavenly capacity for turning a phrase.

That is a lot of freight for one book, but these 596 pages of correspondence carry it. It is one of the most moving, and funny, human documents I have read in years. Sally Fitzgerald, one of O'Connor's best friends (I cannot bring myself to call this delightfully old-fashioned lady Ms. O'Connor) has chosen well from the large body of extant correspondence. My only quibble is I wish she had included more of the funny ones to Richard Stern, which have appeared in quarterlies. But what she has included is a treasure-trove; O'Connor was a voluminous letter-writer. (She didn't own a television until 1961, when some Dominican Sisters gave her one in gratitude for getting their book, *A Memoir of Mary Ann*, to a publisher. She also spent next to no time listening to music until late in her life: "All classical music sounds alike to me," she says in one letter, "and all the rest of it sounds like The Beatles.") What she did do, when not writing fiction or letters, was to read voraciously, exploring everything from St. Justin Martyr to Salinger, Karl Barth to John Barth. She was also, it might be added, a constant reader of *Commonweal* (in the pages of which, alas, her early books received rough treatment. She remained a subscriber anyway.)

Flannery O'Connor wrote fiction for about twenty years, and much of that time she was defending what she wrote. She resented being lumped into any school—the gothic, the grotesque, the Southern decaying magnolia. Even her first editor did not understand her purposes. He addressed her letters as if "to a slightly dim-witted Camp Fire Girl" (in O'Connor's words). Her letters abound with illuminating explications of her texts. For instance, many of her characters were intended as the Devil personified: "My Devil has a name, a history, and a definite plan. His name is Lucifer, he's a fallen angel, his sin is pride, and his aim is the destruction of the Divine Plan."

One of her favorites of her stories, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," she describes as "a duel of sorts between the Grandmother and her superficial beliefs and the Misfit's more profoundly-felt involvement with Christ's action which set the world off balance for him." The mummy in *Wise Blood* she describes as "The figure for the new Jesus—a shrivelled man." The "artificial nigger" of the story of that name was meant to convey "the redemptive quality of the Negro's suffering for us all." Another story, "A Temple of the Holy Ghost," is said to revolve about the question, "What is purity?" "A Stroke of Good Fortune" is about "the rejecting of life at the source." She saw all of her stories as being about the action of grace on a character who is unwilling to support it: "Like when the Grandmother recognizes the Misfit as one of her own children and reaches out to touch him. It's the moment of grace for her anyway—a silly old woman—but it leads him to shoot her. This moment of grace excites the devil to frenzy." Of her second and best novel, *The Violent Bear It Away*, she reveals,

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From Flannery O'Connor:

TRUTH AND EMOTION

But I can never agree with you that the Incarnation, or any truth, has to satisfy emotionally to be right (and I would not agree that for the natural man the Incarnation does not satisfy emotionally). It does not satisfy emotionally for the person brought up under many forms of false intellectual discipline such as 19th-century mechanism, for instance. Leaving the Incarnation aside, the very notion of God's existence is not emotionally satisfactory anymore for great numbers of people, which does not mean that God ceases to exist. M. Sartre finds God emotionally unsatisfactory in the extreme, as do most of my friends of less stature than he. The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it emotionally. A higher paradox confounds emotion as well as reason and there are long periods in the lives of all of us, and of the saints, when the truth as revealed by faith is hideous, emotionally disturbing, downright repulsive. Witness the dark night of the soul in individual saints. Right now the whole world seems to be going through a dark night of the soul. [To "A," 28 August 1955]

CHRIST & THE FLESH

To see Christ as God and man is probably no more difficult today than it has always been, even if today there seem to be more reasons to doubt. For you it may be a matter of not being able to accept what you call a suspension of the laws of the flesh and the physical, but for my part I think that when I know what the laws of the flesh and the physical really are, then I will know what God is. We know them as we see them, not as God sees them. For me it is the virgin birth, the Incarnation, the resurrection which are the true laws of the flesh and the physical. Death, decay, destruction are the suspension of these laws. I am always astonished at the emphasis the church puts on the body. It is not the soul she says that will rise but the body, glorified. I have always thought that purity was the most mysterious of the virtues, but it occurs to me that it would never have entered the human consciousness to conceive of purity if we were not to look forward to a resurrection of the body, which will be flesh and spirit united in peace, in the way they were in Christ. The resurrection of Christ seems the high point in the law of nature. . . . [To "A," 6 September 1955]

LIFE ON CRUTCHES

I have decided I must be a pretty pathetic sight with these crutches. I was in Atlanta the other day in Davison's. An old lady got on the elevator behind me and as soon as I turned around she fixed me with a moist gleaming eye and said in a loud voice, "Bless you, darling!" I felt exactly like the Misfit and I gave her a weakly lethal look, whereupon greatly encouraged, she grabbed my arm and whispered (very loud) in my ear. "Remember what they said to John at the gate, darling!" It was not my floor but I got off and I suppose the old lady was astounded at how quick I could get away on crutches. I have a one-legged friend and I asked her what they said to John at the gate. She said she reckoned they said "The lame shall enter first." This may be because the lame will be able to knock everybody else aside with their crutches. [To "A," 10 November 1955]

COMMONWEAL

There was a review of [Caroline Gordon's *The Malefactors*] in the *Commonweal* by a Fr. Simons (the same boy who said I had a Lutheran sensibility) which did you see? Do you take *Commonweal?* I take it and I used to send it to a girl in a T.B. sanitarium every week when I finished it but she got well, then I sent it to a patient at the local state sanitarium but he escaped so now they are just piling up. . . . [To "A," 19 May 1956]

A CATHOLIC CELEBRITY

. . . They . . . decreed that I should be invited to a huge convention luncheon of the Nat. Asso. of Cat. Women. . . If ever there has been devised something suitable for the remission of temporal punishment due to sin, this is it. It lasted three hours, included a talk by a priest and one by a bishop, the introduction of sixteen guests (I was the sixteenth like Gen. Tennessee Flintrock Sash), pledges, resolutions, welcomes, responses, and dedications. . . . I sat at a table with 8 ladies . . . and an ancient deaf priest named Fr. Murphy—next to him. Said he to me:

And wharre are you from?

Milledgeville, Georgia, Father.

Eh?

Milledgeville, Georgia.

I didn't get that.

MILLEDGEVILLE, GEORGIA

What city is that near?

MACON (great volume).

Mi-kun? I never heard of that.

Where are you from, Father?

(Pause—waiting to get the ladies' attention.) Purrr-gatory.

(Laughter)

During the priest's and bishop's addresses he took out his breviary and read it under the table. I wished I had had one. [To "A," 5 May 1956]

LOURDES

About the Lourdes business. I am going as a pilgrim, not a patient. I will not be taking any bath. I am one of these people who could die for his religion easier than take a bath for it. . . . [To "A," 14 December 1957]

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"The burden of the book is taken up with the struggles for the boy's soul between the dead uncle and the schoolteacher. The modern reader will identify himself with the schoolteacher, but it is the old man who speaks for me."

As analytical as she was of her own work, O'Connor was impatient (to say the least) with wrong-headed academics who wrote to inflict their own interpretations upon her, or, worse, asking her to interpret the works for them. She despised strained analyses, saying of such critics, "Every story is a frog in a bottle to them." She addressed one Freudian critic, "I'm sorry the book didn't come off for you but I think it is no wonder it didn't since you see everything in terms of sex symbols, and in a way that would not enter any head—the lifted bough, the fork of the tree, the corkscrew. It doesn't seem to be conceivable to you that such things merely have a natural place in the story, a natural use. . . ." To a professor of English she wrote tersely, from her hospital bed, "As for Mrs. May, I must have named her that because I knew some English teacher would write and ask me why. I think you folks sometimes strain the soup too thin. . . ."

Whenever she wrote about the craft of fiction, which was frequently, she was instructive: "One never writes for a subtle reader. Or if you do, you shouldn't." "You don't write a story because you have an *idea* but because you have a believable character or just simply because you have a story." "If there is no possibility for change in a character, we have no interest in him." "It may be that a writer can sentimentalize certain segments of the population and get away with it." She even discerned a difference between the way a convert and the "born-variety" of Catholic write: "With the born variety the point of view is more naturally integrated into the personality." She urged younger fiction writers to reread Joyce's *Dubliners* for his handling of epiphany and form.

Insights into O'Connor's life revealed by these letters are saddening. Victim of lupus (which killed her at 39), bone disintegration, shingles, anemia, later a tumor and cystitis and kidney infection, she was, as Sally Fitzgerald suggests, not so much stoical as serene. She accepted her loss of hair and swollen face and crutches with grace. She seems never to have liked her appearance, describing herself to one correspondent as "all spectacles and teeth." There are no letters to lovers. When a relative pays for her to visit Lourdes to take the cure, she prays not for her crippled limbs but for the completion of her second novel, seven years in the making. She was sincere when writing a friend that she'd rather finish the book than walk. When *Time* magazine later reviews that novel with a full medical description of her lupus, she describes the piece as "a really sickening review and in very bad taste."

She wanted no personal sympathy, merely artistic appreciation. Yet, late in life, she gave a "public reading" in Texas at which "there was no public." The idea of Flannery O'Connor journeying alone from Georgia to Texas on crutches to appear in an empty auditorium is heartbreaking and absurd. Yet she joked of this, as with everything, accepting her lack of recognition as she accepted the constant presence of pain: "I have never been anywhere but sick. In a sense sickness is a place, more instructive than a long trip to Europe, and it's always a place where there's no com-

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pany, where nobody can follow. Sickness before death is a very appropriate thing and I think those who don't have it miss one of God's mercies. . . ."

Obviously she possessed great faith. The title given this collection, *The Habit of Being*, stems from a concept she had learned from the writings of Jacques Maritain, "the habit of art" defined as a quality or virtue of the mind essential to the artist. O'Connor's development as a writer did not proceed as something separate from life as she lived it. Her letters reveal an integrated personality (in the Jungian sense) continually ascending in its strength, humor and generosity—acquiring, not only the habit of art, but the habit of being. The title might contain another meaning (one of which the author would not approve, knowing how she shied from "double-meanings"). But "habit" here might also be seen as a nun's habit: few have possessed greater dedication to Christian principles. One almost suspects her of taking private vows of poverty. When she knew *Esquire* would pay her $1500 a story, she persisted in sending them to the *Sewanee* and *Kenyon* reviews (". . . there should be some folks that some things mean more to them than money . . ."). She continually wrote her spiritually-wandering friends that, if they wanted their faith, they had to work for it. "What people don't realize is how much religion costs. They think faith is a big electric blanket, when of course it is the cross." Some of her most profoundly expressed beliefs ("assumptions") were expressed in letters to Dr. T. R. Spivey. These letters alone would commend the volume. It is uplifting to find a modern writer of fiction who still conceives the church as the body of Christ, Christ continuing in time, and as such a divine institution: "If the church is not a divine institution, it will turn into an Elks Club."

Which brings us to O'Connor's humor, deeply rooted in Southern manners and in a profound appreciation of the grotesque. Space does not permit a long list of O'Connorisms. A few will do—Within these letters, we are told that rereading her first novel was like "spending the day eating a horse blanket"; election day consists of "my Mama and I . . .

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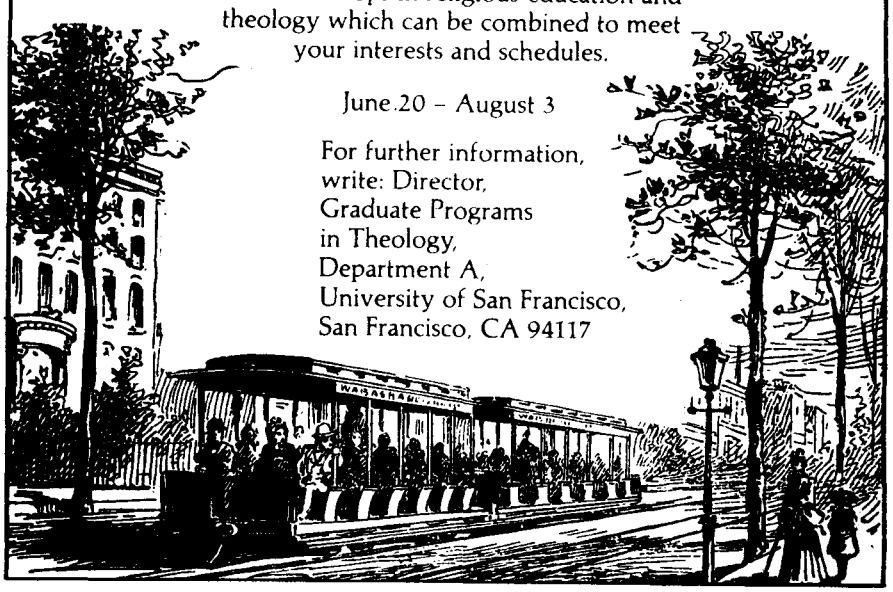

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on the way to the polls to cancel out each other's vote"; "My mama got her hand caught in the electric mixer but both survived"; O'Connor's salt-free diet tastes just like "stewed Kleenex"; "I asked the steward on the airplane what he did with the dirty dishes. When we get to Chicago, he says, we push them down a slot. I would like to work out some such arrangement"; "We have a fine new literature commission in this state, composed of a preacher, a picture-show manager, and some other worthy who I keep thinking must or should be the warden at the state penitentiary"; and, "I think it's charming that Cardinal Spellman writes bad novels. If he wrote good novels, I'd be worried about the church."

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Full of ourselves

THE CULTURE OF NARCISSISM

Christopher Lasch

Norton, $11.95, 268 pp.

George W. Shea

GIVEN Americans' fascination with diagnosis, medical, psychological and even automotive, it is not surprising that, as signs of social illness have appeared in our land, we have been treated almost annually to book-length diagnoses of our nation's maladies. Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism* is the latest addition to the "what's wrong with us" bibliography; and it has some disturbing things to say about our cultural and political health.

As the title of his book suggests, Lasch believes that narcissism lies at the root of our society's malaise. Quite logically, therefore, he begins his study with a consideration of the narcissistic personality. Drawing from both Freud and later writers on the subject, he describes the narcissistic personality as one dominated by a grandiose conception of self, a conception which renders images of the real self and of others weak and empty. The narcissist's inflated self image, initially created to mask his disappointment with both self and others, forces him in fact to live in a thinly populated psychic world and to experience intense feelings of emptiness and inauthenticity. When his attempts to validate his self image fail, he falls into a depression characterized by frustration and rage.

It is Lasch's belief that narcisssism has become the predominant psychic disorder of our age, replacing the hysterical and obsessive neuroses more common at the turn of the century. This, Lasch tells us, is a reflection of the tensions and anxieties produced by our social system. In other words, according to Lasch, our culture both elicits narcissistic behavior from its members and advances those with marked narcissistic traits to positions of prominence and power. Finally, institutions which shape personality, families, schools and the media, once infected themselves, hasten the process by which narcissistic behavior becomes the most attractive strategy for dealing with modern life.

Having established the psychological base of his thesis, Lasch proceeds in his earlier chapters to describe the narcissistic personality of our time. His list of narcissistic traits is a chilling one: superficial charm, pseudo-awareness, sexual promiscuity, hypochondria, avoidance of both competition and dependence, shallowness, the inability to form deep

REVIEWERS

ROBERT PHILLIPS's books include *The Confessional Poets* (Southern Illinois University Press) and *Aspects of Alice*, recently re-issued by Vintage. His new collection of poems, *The Pregnant Man*, has just been published by Doubleday.

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and lasting relationships, an inability to mourn, and a lurking fear of aging and death. The narcissistic personality is marked as well by the belief that history is irrelevant and that society has no future. Quite naturally, then, the narcissist is unable to identify with posterity or to see himself as part of an historical stream.

For Lasch, Arthur Miller's Willy Loman symbolizes the postwar personality, with its need to be well liked; but the symbol of the narcissistic '70s is not the salesman but the hooker. In Lasch's own words, "She too sells herself for a living, but her seductiveness hardly signifies a wish to be well liked. She craves admiration, but scorns those who provide it and thus derives little gratification from her social success. She attempts to move others while remaining unmoved herself. The fact that she lives in a milieu of interpersonal relations does not make her a conformist or 'other-directed' type. She remains a loner, dependent on others only as a hawk depends on chickens. She exploits the ethic of pleasure which has replaced the ethic of achievement, but her career, more than any other, reminds us that contemporary hedonism, of which she is the supreme symbol, originates not in the pursuit of pleasure but in the war of all against all, in which even the most intimate encounters become a form of mutual exploitation."

In the later chapters of his book Lasch examines various human activities and the manifestations of narcissistic behavior that now characterizes them. In several of these chapters a single theme, the eclipse of reality by illusion, recurs. Thus, in the world of work, according to Lasch, the illusion of achievement and success is more important than real accomplishment. In politics, spectacle overshadows results. Even radical protest becomes merely a form of self-dramatization. In the family, the notion of moral authority fades, as the super-ego fades in the narcissistic individual, and is replaced by a feverish effort to conform to some socially acceptable idea of normalcy. Even sports become trivialized by commercialism, by the emphasis placed on spectacle and on super-stars with whom the spectators need to identify. And so games themselves are transformed. No longer played with abandon, they lose their ability to raise the spirits of either players or spectators, as games once did.

In some areas Lasch draws even grimmer conclusions. His analysis of the sexuality of our narcissistic age is utterly pessimistic. He sees women as caught in a basic contradiction which promises them liberation from the role of victim and shrew only to force them to act as shrews in their daily dealings with men. The narcissistic male, on the other hand, wanting sex but fearful of dependence and of lasting relationships, is unable to provide either the stimulation or tenderness his partner desires.

Grimmest of all is Lasch's treatment of education. Parents, he tells us, are deliberately kept in a state of anxiety about child-rearing, and are thus forced to depend on a corps of experts and advertisers to tell them how to raise their offspring. And the schools are no better off. Education for adjustment, so attractive to the narcissistic mentality, creates according to Lasch, a stupefied citizenry, so incapacitated that it cannot perform the most routine actions and tasks without a textbook.

What are we to make of Lasch's diagnosis? Some of his perceptions are quite obviously not original. Anyone who has been paying attention to America during the past two decades is aware of an alarming growth of ego; but it is, after all, inevitable that any valid diagnosis include an explanation of even the most obvious symptoms. The more critical question is whether Lasch's frame of reference, Freudian theory, and his controlling hypothesis, the pervasiveness of narcissism in our society, leads to deeper insights into our society's ills; or whether these are merely used as fashionable containers into which the author's perceptions are then forced. It seems to me that, although Lasch's framework and

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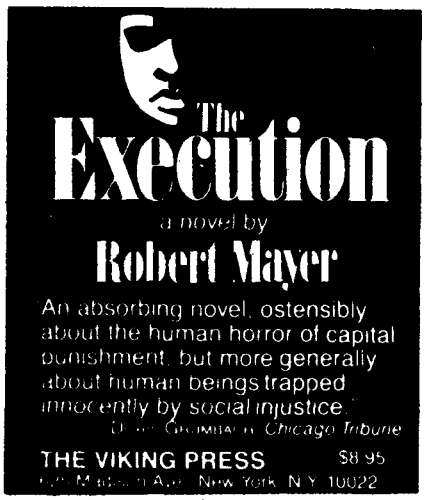
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hypothesis may inevitably make his vision a partial one, they nevertheless "pay off," in that they lead us to see hidden symptoms, deeper malignancies and new relations between these.

Some negative criticism is, however, not entirely out of place. Lasch seems to suffer from the intellectuals' fallacy, the belief that all Americans are just like the faculties or editorial staffs on which they themselves work. One can't help suspecting, however, that there are many Americans who still value achievement rather than illusion, who still believe in history and posterity, who have not abandoned hope or a belief in the legitimacy of moral authority, who still enjoy good sports, good sex, and perhaps, rarely, even good work and politics. And it is not unlikely that our hope should be placed in them rather than in the diagnosticians.

It is when one raises the question of hope and of the future that Lasch's book is most disappointing. Given the Freudian context, this is perhaps to be expected. Still, it is depressing. Lasch admits in his introduction that he is writing not about signs of life in our country, but about a culture which is dying, which has led to the dead-end of narcissistic preoccupation with self. Nevertheless, one would have liked some indication, beyond the vague reference to "communities of competence" in his final chapter, of what the new signs of life and hope are.

Perhaps Mr. Lasch will write another book in which he will not only diagnose, but make a prognosis, or even prescribe. Until he does, readers will be well advised to take up the present volume. It has much of value to say about the state of our nation's health.

In brief

CHRIST IN ECLIPSE, *by F.J. Sheed, Sheed Andrews and McMeel, $8.95,* 158 pp.

In this study of Christian life and practice, Frank Sheed returns to a theme found in many of his writings, the need of a restoration of the primacy of Jesus in the Christian perspective. The title, *Christ in Eclipse,* connotes the absence of Christ from Christian life as main motivating force. He finds this lacuna even in the documents of Vatican II. At home and even on his lecture tours as far away as India, he has discovered many genuinely committed Christians, Catholic and Protestant, who admire Christ, accept him doctrinally and sacramentally "but do not in fact find him very interesting, or his message meeting any needs they are aware of in themselves."

In this particular volume, Sheed does not argue his point. He simply urges that we ask ourselves what our silence about Christ means at this time when the extreme right is denouncing change as heresy while the extreme left sneers at what smacks of the traditional. Each chapter is an examination, not of conscience but of our consciousness of what Christ really means to us. The treatment is crisp, lucid, broad-gauged, though I was surprised to find so global a traveler giving short shrift to social justice and problems of the Third World.

Sheed is absolutely right. Christ is in eclipse, and has been for a few centuries. Since the Reformation, Christians have been quarreling about ecclesiology rather than reading up on Christology, and ecumenical time is needed to bring our Christian vision back into focus. Vatican II did not achieve it because its purpose was pastoral, not theological or devotional. At any rate, Frank Sheed deserves a *summa cum laude* for his unflagging efforts to direct our minds and hearts to the centrality of Christ as life-source of the Christian religion.

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